Claims

What is claimed is:

1.   A method for enabling a function of an information handling system configured for communication with a central system via a communication link, the method comprising the steps of:

    providing communication between the information handling system and the central system via the communication link;

    requesting authentication via the communication link from the central system for enabling the function on the information handling system; and

    upon receipt of the authentication from the central system, enabling the function to be performed independent of the communication link with the central system.

2.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the authentication requesting step comprises communicating an identification for the information handling system to the central system.

3.   The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the identification communicating step further comprises encrypting the information handling system identification.

4.   The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

    receiving the authentication request from the information handling system in the central system;

    determining if the authentication request is valid; and

    upon validating the authentication request, providing authentication to the information handling system.

5.   The method as recited in claim 4, further comprising the step of encrypting the authentication.

1   6.   The method as recited in claim 4, further comprising the step of:

2   upon determining that the authentication request is invalid, denying

3   authentication.

1   7.   The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of:

2   upon failure to receive authentication from the central system, disabling the

3   function.

1   8.   The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the authentication requesting step is

2   repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the function.

1   9.   The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of terminating the

2   communication link prior to executing at least a part of the function.

1   10.   The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising the step of disabling

2   the function after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the

3   authentication has been reached.

1   11.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the function comprises starting the

2   information handling system.

1   12.   The method as recited in claim 11, wherein starting the information handling

2   system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

1   13.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein authentication comprises of an

2   encrypted token passed between the central system and the information handling system.

1   14.   The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the token allows provision of the

2   function independent of the location of the information handling system relative to the

3   central system.

1   15.   The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the token allows provision of the

2   function only from a predetermined location with regard to the communication link

3   between the central system and the information handling system.

1   16.   The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the token allows for execution of a

2   predetermined number of said functions from a remote location.

1   17.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the function comprises loading an

2   operating system.

1   18.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the function comprises executing a

2   software application.

1   19.   The method as recited in claim 18, wherein each authentication received allows

2   execution of the software application for a predetermined period of time.

1   20.   A program of instructions storable on a medium readable by an information

2   handling system for implementing a method enabling the information handling system

3   to execute a function, said information handling system being configured to communicate

4   with a central system via a communication link, the steps comprising:

5   providing communication between the information handling system and the

6   central system via the communication link;

7   · requesting authentication via the communication link from the central system for

8   enabling the function on the information handling system; and

9   upon receipt of the authentication from the central system, enabling the function

10   to be performed independent of the communication link with the central system.

1   21.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the authentication

2   requesting step comprises communicating an identification for the information handling

3   system to the central system.

1   22.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 21, wherein the identification

2   communicating step further comprises encrypting the information handling system

3   identification.

1   23.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, further comprising the steps

2   of:

3   receiving the authentication request from the information handling system in the

4   central system;

5   determining if the authentication request is valid; and

6   upon validating the authentication request, providing authentication to the

7   information handling system.

1   24.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 23, further comprising the step of

2   encrypting the authentication.

98-0862   30

1 25.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 23, further comprising the step of:

2   upon determination that the authentication request is invalid, denying

3 authentication.

1 26.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of:

2   upon failure to receive authentication from the central system, disabling the

3 function.

1 27.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 26, wherein the authentication

2 requesting step is repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the

3 function.

1 28.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of

2 terminating the communication link prior to executing at least a part of the function.

1 29.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 28, further comprising the step of

2 disabling the function after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the

3 authentication has been reached.

1 30.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the function

2 comprises starting the information handling system.

1 31.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 30, wherein starting the

2 information handling system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

1 32.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the function

2 comprises loading an operating system.

1 33.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the function

98-0862   31

2   comprises executing a software application.

1   34.   The program of instructions as recited in claim 33, wherein each authentication

2   received allows execution of the software application for a predetermined period of time.

1   35.   An information handling system comprising:

2   a processor for executing a program of instructions on the information handling

3   system;

4   a memory coupled to the processor for storing the program of instructions

5   executable by the processor; and

6   a communication device coupled to the processor for establishing a

7   communication link between the information handling system and a central system via

8   a network; and

9   said program of instructions capable of configuring the information handling

10   system to request authentication from the central system via the communication link for

11   enabling a function, and upon receipt of authentication from the central system, enabling

12   the function.

1   36.   The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the program of

2   instructions further configures the information handling system to communicate an

3   identification to the central system.

1   37.   The information handling system as recited in claim 36, wherein the information

2   handling system identification is encrypted.

1   38.   The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the central

2   system, upon receiving the authentication request from the information handling system,

3   determines if the authentication request is valid, and upon determination that the

4   authentication request is valid, providing authentication to the information handling

5   system.

1   39.   The information handling system as recited in claim 38, wherein the

2   authentication is encrypted.

1   40.   The information handling system as recited in claim 38, wherein the central
2   system, upon determining that the authentication request is invalid, denies authentication.

1   41.   The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the program of
2   instructions further configures the information handling system to disable the function
3   if authentication is not received from the central system.

1   42.   The information handling system as recited in claim 41, wherein the
2   authentication request is repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the
3   function.

1   43.   The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the program of
2   instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to terminate the
3   communication link prior to execution of at least part of the function.

1   44.   The information handling system as recited in claim 43, wherein the program of
2   instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to disable the
3   function after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the
4   authentication has been reached.

1   45.   The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the function
2   comprises starting the information handling system.

1   46.   The information handling system as recited in claim 45, wherein starting the
2   information handling system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

1   47.   The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the function
2   comprises loading an operating system.

1   48.   The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the function

2   comprises executing a software application.

1   49.   The information handling system as recited in claim 48, wherein each

2   authentication received allows execution of the software application for a predetermined

3   period of time.

1 50.   An information handling system comprising:

2   means for executing a program of instructions on the information handling

3 system;

4   means, coupled to the executing means, for storing the program of instructions

5 executable by the executing means;

6   means, coupled to the executing means, for establishing a communication link

7 with a central system via a network; and

8   said program of instructions capable of configuring the information handling

9 system to request authentication from the central system via the communication link for

10 enabling a function, and upon receipt of authentication from the central system, enabling

11 the function.

1 51.   The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the program of

2 instructions further configures the information handling system to communicate an

3 identification to the central system.

1 52.   The information handling system as recited in claim 51, wherein the information

2 handling system identification is encrypted.

1 53.   The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the central

2 system, upon receiving the authentication request from the information handling system,

3 determines if the authentication request is valid, and upon determination that the

4 authentication request is valid, providing authentication to the information handling

5 system.

1 54.   The information handling system as recited in claim 53, wherein the

2 authentication is encrypted.

1 55.   The information handling system as recited in claim 53, wherein the central

2 system, upon determining that the authentication request is invalid, denies authentication.

1 56.   The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the program of

2 instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to disable the

3 function if authentication is not received from the central system.

1 57.   The information handling system as recited in claim 56, wherein the

2 authentication request is repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the

3 function.

1 58.   The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the program of

2 instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to terminate the

3 communication link prior to executing at least a part of the function.

1 59.   The information handling system as recited in claim 58, wherein the program of

2 instructions further configures the information handling system to disable the function

3 after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the authentication has

4 been reached.

1 60.   The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the function

2 comprises starting the information handling system.

1 61.   The information handling system as recited in claim 60, wherein starting the

2 information handling system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

1 62.   The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the function

2 comprises loading an operating system.

1 63.   The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the function

2 comprises executing a software application.

1   64.   The information handling system as recited in claim 63, wherein each
2   authentication received allows execution of the software application for a predetermined
3   period of time.